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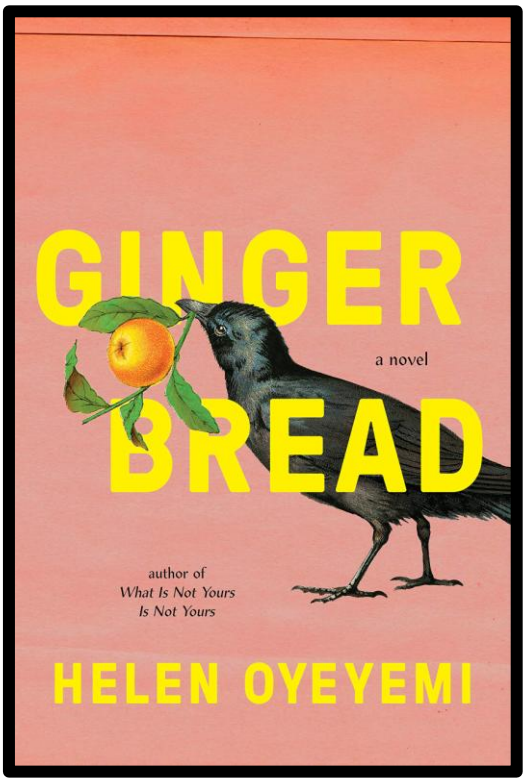

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Book Details

Published March 5th 2019 by Random House Large Print Publishing
ISBN 1984882899 (ISBN13: 9781984882899)
Edition Language English

Book Synopsis

The prize-winning, bestselling author of Boy, Snow, Bird and What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours returns with a bewitching and inventive novel.

Influenced by the mysterious place gingerbread holds in classic children's stories--equal parts wholesome and uncanny, from the tantalizing witch's house in "Hansel and Gretel" to the man-shaped confection who one day decides to run as fast as he can--beloved novelist Helen Oyeyemi invites readers into a delightful tale of a surprising family legacy, in which the inheritance is a recipe.

Perdita Lee may appear to be your average British schoolgirl; Harriet Lee may seem just a working mother trying to penetrate the school social hierarchy; but there are signs that they might not be as normal as they think they are. For one thing, they share a gold-painted, seventh-floor walk-up apartment with some surprisingly verbal vegetation. And then there's the gingerbread they make. Londoners may find themselves able to take or leave it, but it's very popular in Druhástrana, the far-away (and, according to Wikipedia, non-existent) land of Harriet Lee's early youth. In fact, the world's truest lover of the Lee family gingerbread is Harriet's charismatic childhood friend, Gretel Kercheval--a figure who seems to have had a hand in everything (good or bad) that has happened to Harriet since they met.

Decades later, when teenaged Perdita sets out to find her mother's long-lost friend, it prompts a new telling of Harriet's story. As the book follows the Lees through encounters with jealousy, ambition, family grudges, work, wealth, and real estate, gingerbread seems to be the one thing that reliably holds a constant value. Endlessly surprising and satisfying, written with Helen Oyeyemi's inimitable style and imagination, it is a true feast for the reader.